ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

The present invention provides a method of backtracing network performance by locating a Quality of Service (QOS) monitor at a web site that actively monitors incoming traffic. When the monitor detects a new user, the monitor traces the route back to the user, measuring the performance of as many intermediate links as the monitor can traverse. In some cases, this trace will extend back all the way to the end users machines. More often the trace will end at a corporate firewall or a router near the end users dial-up modem pool. Regardless of how close to the user the trace gets, it will track the performance of the actual routes that are being traversed by actual users at the time that those users are actually accessing the web site. The result, spread across measurements of many users, is a snapshot of the network quality of service that the site is actually experiencing, for the routes that are actually being used to access the site. Accordingly, a more realistic and accurate result is obtained.